

ways; there is no law that it *must* be simple;
 but I know
 no poet who could not sometimes be simple,
 who has
 ever been great.

Meanwhile, if Ronsard could not wholly
 conquer his
 peasant-girl, he had conquered France.
 Henri II favoured
 him; Charles IX became his personal friend.
 Elizabeth
 of England sent him a diamond, the Floral
 Games of
 Toulouse a Minerva in solid silver. Mary of
 Scotland
 gave him her portrait and wept over his
 verse. Chaste-
 lard, thrice found hiding in her bedroom
 and at last
 sentenced by her to death, went to the block
 reciting, in
 place of any ghostly consolation, Ronsard's
Hymne de la
Mort:

Je te salue, heureuse et profitable Mort,
 Des extremes douleurs medecin et confort.

He had become the Prince of Poets.

Yet these things too passed away. From
 that day in
 1559 when Montgomery's lance pierced
 the eye of
 Henri II, a shadow fell across the House of
 Valois and
 a France now beginning to glow red with
 the blood and
 flame of the Religious Wars. Ronsard,
 loathing fanatic-
 ism and civil war in the cause of any creed,
 attacked the
 Huguenots and was attacked in return with
 all the scur-
 rilities of Renaissance controversy. Du Bellay
 was dead.
 The adored Mary Stuart, a few months
 Queen of France,
 had gone back to her bleak Scotland. The
 prince he
 loved sounded the tocsin of Saint
 Bartholomew and shot
 at his own subjects from the windows of the

Louvre.

Twenty days later, what was to have been
Ronsard's life-
work and made him the Homer and Virgil of
France, the
Franchise, dropped stillborn from the press
(1572). The
work contained only four books of the
twenty-four
destined to tell the rise of French greatness
from the
inevitable Trojan origin—Francus, son of
Hector; but